

Guidelines for Toe Clipping of Rodents

The section on Identification and Records¹ in the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (Guide) indicates the following means of animal identification: "...room, rack, pen, stall, and cage cards with written or bar-coded information; collars, bands, plates, and tabs; colored stains; ear notches and tags; tattoos; subcutaneous transponders; and freeze brands. Toe-clipping (removal of the first bone of certain toes, corresponding to a predetermined numbering code²), as a method of identification of small rodents, should be used only when no other individual identification method is feasible, and should be performed only on altricial neonates."

The "toe clipping" method of marking an animal is a potentially painful procedure which should be discouraged and only done with the approval of the Animal Care and Use Committee (ACUC). The principal investigator must justify to the ACUC that no other methods of marking the animal is feasible. The ACUC must also be satisfied that the procedure will be performed in the most painless and humane way possible and that all accepted veterinary procedures, including anesthesia and antisepsis are addressed.

IRAC - 6/22/88

ARAC - 9/30/92

Reapproved - 5/8/96

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Revised - 5/12/04

Revised – 06/13/07

References

- 1 Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, National Research Council, National Academy Press, 1996, page 46.
- 2 Assistant Laboratory Animal Technician Manual, American Association for Laboratory Animal Science, 1998, page 45.